



Office for
Veterans' Affairs

 THE ARMED FORCES
COVENANT FUND TRUST

Reducing Veteran Homelessness Programme

Programme Guidance

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PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

Under this programme the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust will award grants on behalf of the Office for Veterans' Affairs towards projects that contribute to the aims of the government's ambition to reduce veteran homelessness and end rough sleeping.

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About this Programme

This programme will fund projects that will provide additional capacity in services for veterans who are at risk of homelessness. The aims of the programme are to:

- Contribute to the aims of the government's ambition to reduce veteran homelessness and end rough sleeping.
- Deliver sustainable supported housing to meet the needs of veterans.

The programme will provide funds towards housing related support e.g., mental health support and addiction services so people can benefit and regain independence in their lives.

You can apply for up to £500,000 per year (a total of £1 million over two years) **per organisation**. We would expect high-complex need projects to have a higher cost per head and low-to-medium complex need projects to have a lower cost per head. Where an organisation is bidding for multiple schemes (locations), each scheme should be separately costed, but combined as a single application.

You can also apply for an Enhanced Award of up to an additional £250,000, per year (a total of £500,000 over two years) if you can show us that extending your project will fill a significant level of currently unmet need. See below for further details of Enhanced Awards.

You can only apply if you are a registered charity, housing association or registered social housing provider, and you can show us that you have considerable experience in providing support to homeless veterans. You need to show us that you have appropriate governance to manage risks effectively given the needs of the veteran beneficiaries, and that you will work directly with the veterans who use your services to shape delivery of your project.

Your project can be up to two years in length, and should begin within two months of the date of award.

If we award you a grant; you will be required to work with the programme evaluators. There is more information on this later in the guidance.

A strong application will be able to show; how the project will contribute to the aims of the government's ambition to reduce veteran homelessness and end rough sleeping, who you would work with to deliver the project and how the benefits of the work would be sustained beyond the life of the grant.

A strong application would be able to show how it will work with Operation Fortitude; the central referral pathway for homeless veterans or veterans at risk of homelessness, whereby the veteran would be referred to a central point coordinated by the Riverside Group. The Riverside Group will then work in partnership with wider veteran and general housing providers and organisations, to identify a solution. Supporting Op Fortitude will be a formal requirement under the Terms and Conditions of the grant.

This programme is open to providers throughout the UK. We would expect strong applications to be able to show how they will work effectively and collaboratively with Local Authorities and the relevant Devolved Administration in the areas in which your project is offering support.

You will need to give us a high-level budget with milestones which demonstrates that you will deliver the required outcomes and impact. You should include this as an attachment to your application. (See 'how to apply' below for more information about this document). If your application is successful, we will ask for a more detailed budget and timeline before the first payment of grant is made.

You should think carefully about value for money, and show in your application why you believe your costs to be reasonable.

What are we looking for?



Adaptable

We would like to fund projects that are adaptable to the needs of veterans; including high, medium and low level support needs. A good application will be able to show us clear evidence of how you have identified these support needs and why you are confident that your budgeted costs of meeting these needs are robust.

Veterans who are experiencing homelessness can have complex challenges within their lives. Under this programme, we will consider project proposals that have higher costs per head in delivery, and therefore may reach lower numbers of veteran beneficiaries overall if you can show us that the support needs for this group of veterans are complex.



Sustainable outcomes

Under the programme, we will only fund projects that enable vulnerable veterans to access and remain engaged within supported housing as an alternative to street living. A good application will be able to show us similar work that you have done with veterans and how you will work with veterans who have experienced complex needs to co-design the services that you will develop and implement as part of your project.

Your project must be able to clearly show how you will support veterans to transition to lower level support. By this we mean enabling veterans to step down to lower levels of support/community housing/tenancy and independent living e.g., private rented sector.



Collaborative

You should also show us that your project will support integration for veterans with the wider community by working with other mainstream organisations and specialist veterans organisations.

You should also tell us which organisations you will be working to support veterans. If another organisation will be receiving part of any grant we award, you will need to have a partnership agreement in place. There is more information on partnership agreements later in this document.

What are the aims of this programme?

We want to support projects that improve the capacity of services in supported housing to be better able to help veterans with a range of needs. Through doing this we can help reduce veteran homelessness.

You should show us how your project will meet the aims of this programme. Your application should include detailed information on the following:

- How your project would work with Operation Fortitude and how you would engage with a central referral pathway, if this support was available. (You can find more information about Operation Fortitude on our website, [here](#))
- How many supported housing beds your project will provide support for; and how you will do this. By this we mean the wraparound support or services that you will provide to a veteran who is staying in a bed or facility provided by your organisation. You should tell us what this support will look like, and tell us if this is different to support that you are currently offering to veterans.
- How many veterans will benefit from this support over the life of the grant e.g. bed spaces and expected throughput.
- Where the support will be offered, and in what locations.
- How you know that your project is needed. Why you need more capacity to be able to better support veterans. What assessment has been made of the capacity need for the services being proposed (e.g., location, level of need), including the extent or otherwise of such services in your relevant area.
- Whether the support is High (for complex needs) or Medium-Low support (less complex needs).
- What your costs are and how these have been calculated.
- Who you will work with to deliver your project, particularly where other organisations may receive part of any grant that you may be awarded.
- How you will ensure that the provision they will give is safe and based on established good practice. Why you are confident that your application demonstrates good value for money.
- How you will work with local authorities (including those responsible for delivery of the Covenant) and local outreach services to identify veterans who are homeless/have a history of and are at risk of homelessness.
- How you will work with the veterans you are supporting to help that veteran meet their personal goals, achieve a good quality of life, and move to independent or low-level support where possible.
- How you will support veterans from marginalised groups, or those who have previously had less access to appropriate services e.g., women, BAME, LGBT etc.
- That you can demonstrate an understanding of the specific challenges for veterans with physical difficulties.

- Your knowledge of local authorities' social housing allocations policy and how you will move on veterans who aren't eligible for social housing.
- How you will manage/support veterans who might be asked to leave a project, and evidence of what you will do to prevent them from rough sleeping following eviction.
- The outcomes that your project will deliver; and how these will be measured.
- What your plans are for future sustainability and the legacy of this project.
- Show why it does not duplicate but fills a gap or enhances existing provision.
- Show how your project will deliver ongoing benefits that will sustain beyond the life of the grant.
- Your application should show how it will contribute to the aims of government's homelessness policies, including that of Devolved Administrations where applicable.

It is an intent of this programme to enhance the support available to veterans where they may be situated and therefore the geographical spread of applications and the effect on the extent of provision will be taken into account in deciding awards.

Enhanced Awards

Exceptionally the Trust may consider making Enhanced Awards of up to £250,000 per year (a total of £500,000 over two years), in addition to the core grant, in some circumstances. These will be only where organisations can show us that extending a project will fill a significant level of currently unmet need for either

- a significant number of veterans; or
- veterans with particularly complex needs who are unable to access existing provision.

If your organisation wishes to apply for an Enhanced Award you will need to clearly explain in your application what your expanded plans might be: for example, additional locations, highly specialist staff etc. This will mean that your proposal has both 'core' and 'enhanced' elements. Your core project must be a stand-alone project that can be delivered for £500,000 or less per year (£1 million over two years). If you choose to apply for an Enhanced Award you will need to tell us what **additional** work/benefits can be delivered for this extra amount of funding, and how these benefits can be sustained beyond the life of the grant. We will only award funding to exceptional projects under this option, and may make no Enhanced Awards. If your request for an enhanced element is not agreed, you may still be considered for your original or core proposal.

Who can apply?

We invite applications from the following types of organisation:

- Registered charity or housing association that has been registered in the UK for at least five years at the time of grant award, which can demonstrate

relevant experience and engagement in the direct provision of housing for veterans.

OR

- A not for profit registered provider of social housing, who is registered with the relevant regulator of social housing in your part of the UK; and has offered dedicated and specific housing support to veterans for at least five years.

We would expect clear evidence of existing work with the veterans who have experienced homelessness, including evidence of how people with lived experience will be able to strategically shape the project. Applications that can show effective partnership working between Armed Forces charities and specialist or dedicated organisations who will bring expertise and experience to the project, are particularly welcome.

All applicant organisations must have a minimum of three unrelated trustees/directors registered at the time of application and throughout the life of their project if their application is successful.

In order to meet our eligibility criteria, your application must clearly show that

- You have experience in providing supported housing to veterans
- That you have evidence of robust governance to manage risks effectively
- That the activities or services that you are bidding for must not already be in receipt of funding from Government, Local Authority or a similar statutory body. However you can bid for additional funding to enhance existing funded activities or services.

Programme monitoring and evaluation

If we award you a grant, you will need to provide us with monitoring information. This will include regular progress reports on activity and spend, as well as meetings with the Trust.

You will also need to work with the external evaluators for this programme.

The evaluators will conduct a comprehensive evaluation which

- Will explore the needs of veterans that are accessing supported housing, in relation to high, medium and low-level needs and provide insights for future support for homeless veterans
- Will explore how supported housing providers can best collaborate with the wider veterans' - and general homelessness and housing sectors - to achieve the best outcomes for veterans
- Will explore the effectiveness of these grants in the following areas
 - Helping to reduce street homelessness in veterans
 - Do veterans who have received help from this programme avoid street homeless in future?

- Have veterans been able to transition to lower-level care or independent housing where appropriate?

Participating in the programme evaluation will be a formal requirement under our Terms and Conditions of the grant.

Our assessment criteria

Our criteria are set out below. They are important, as we consider each application against these criteria and fund those that we believe will best achieve the programme aims.

The difference your project is making	
What are we looking for?	That the project will improve capacity of services within available supported housing for veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, contributing to reducing veteran homelessness.
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What your proposed project will do and how many veterans this will help ● What needs the veterans have, and how you will meet these needs ● What difference your project will make [see the full list on page 3 of this Guidance]

Delivery of your project	
What are we looking for?	That your proposed project is feasible, that your organisation has the skills and experience to run your project and that the approach you have proposed would be likely to lead to the impact that you are seeking to have.
What do you need to show us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● That you are able to manage your project ● That you will have a clear structure for project governance including how you will manage relationships with project partners ● That you can show evidence of effective governance within your organisation as a whole, and how you will ensure that this project is well run and well managed ● That you'll be able to start your grant activity this financial year ● That you can keep people on your project safe ● That your project will be delivered in line with the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust's ethical values ● Why your project offers good value for money ● That your project does not duplicate statutory provision ● Your plans to ensure a long-term legacy of your work that will continue after the end of the grant

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● That you will work with Operation Fortitude and prioritise referrals from the pathway at times of high demand [Supporting Op Fortitude will be a formal requirement under the Terms and Conditions of the grant].
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What costs can you include in your application?

We can pay for most of the things you'll need for your project or activity, whether it is people's time, costs of delivering work online or buying/hiring equipment that enables you to increase the number of veterans you can support.

It is anticipated that most costs would be for support staff. This could be through directly employed staff or through contracts/partnership agreements with experienced providers.

Your project might include the following costs.

- Staff costs
- Project management costs
- Reasonable organisational overheads

Project budgets could include access costs (such as transport) to enable veterans to engage in wider community activities.

Project budgets could include e.g. short term specialist mental health professionals or other clinical provision where part of an addiction treatment plan, where there is no alternative provision and delay in accessing support would prevent a veteran from being able to access supported housing, leaving that veteran vulnerable to homelessness.

What can't funds be spent on?

There are several things we can't pay for, either because they're not in the spirit of the Fund, do not meet the aims of this programme, or because of relevant legislation or tax rules:

Under this programme, we will not fund

- Activities that duplicate statutory NHS or state provision (though short-term support can be given to veterans e.g., access to addiction treatment)
- Capital projects for creating additional bed spaces
- Refurbishment costs of existing facilities

We also will not fund the following

- Where funding is not benefiting veterans
- Making grants or donations of money or items of value to individuals or families.

- Replacing existing grants and aid from Government, local authorities or a similar statutory body.
- Activities or services that can be funded through rent or housing benefits.
- Projects, activities or services that the state has a legal obligation to provide.
- Where money only benefits one person. By this we mean where your whole project would only benefit one person.
- Repeat or regular projects that require a source of uncommitted funding.
- Investments.
- Paying for ongoing costs of existing partnership activity.
- Fundraising costs, including organising fundraising events and activities.
- Endowments (to provide a source of income).
- Retrospective funding for projects that have already started or taken place before the decision is made on a grant.
- Excessive management or professional fees or contingency costs.

This is not an exhaustive list as we feel it's more useful to focus on what you're trying to achieve and how you're going about this, than to issue long lists of eligible and ineligible costs.

If we award you a grant it can only be spent on the direct costs of non-economic activities to support veterans. If your organisation is separately delivering economic activities, we will require you to clearly designate our grant as being for non-economic or charitable activities.

Post award delivery plan

If your application is successful, you will be required as a condition of grant to produce a detailed delivery plan within the first three months of your project.

Your delivery plan will need to show the milestones for your project and in addition, clearly address the following challenges.

Partnership and engagement

- What mechanisms you will develop to work with local authorities, Devolved Administrations (where relevant), rough sleeping coordinators, charities and other organisations to identify veterans who are/have a history of homelessness and are at risk of homelessness.
- How you will work with the above listed group to help veterans transition to longer term housing solutions that meet their needs.
- How you will work with other veteran support services such as Op Courage to provide holistic support.
- How you will gather data to support the evaluation and understand the demand, specific needs and move on outcomes.

Impact and Sustainability

How you will build on the information that you have given us in your application form to develop a clear plan with milestones on

- how you will gather evidence from your project to show its reach and impact
- how you will follow the progress of veterans who access your service to ensure that their risks of being homeless again are reduced
- how you will develop partnerships and joint working arrangements that will last beyond the life of your grant
- how you will know if your project is successful

How to apply - the application form

You need to apply through our online application form. You can access the application form on our website [via this link](#).

If you don't have an account for our online application portal, then you will need to create one. On our system, you can save a draft application form to complete later or send a draft copy to colleagues. You can also access copies of the application that you've submitted at any time.

When you submit your application, you'll receive an email confirmation. If you don't receive this, then you have not applied. Please remember to check your junk or spam folders. After your application has been successfully submitted, it will show under the Submitted Applications tab on your online grants portal. Please ensure your application shows under the Submitted Applications tab. If it does not show here; then your application has not been submitted.

We cannot accept any late applications.

We highly recommend you plan to submit your application well before the deadline to avoid the risk of missing the cut-off because of technological or other unexpected problems.

It's important that we can contact your organisation, particularly, of course, if you receive a grant. You will need to provide two contacts from your organisation on the application with two different email addresses. At least one contact must hold the relevant authority (CEO or equivalent) to authorise any grant contract and bank account to be used should you be successful. The main contact must have an email address that belongs to your organisation. If this is not provided, your application may be considered ineligible. Please think carefully about who these should be, as they will need to be able to sign acceptance of the grant and use of the bank account on the Offer Letter/ Terms and Conditions if your application was successful.

We strongly recommend that you save an offline version of your application form. You may also find it helpful to complete your application in a Word document and then cut and paste the answers into the online form. Please don't use any formatting, such as tables or numbered lists, in your Word document, as the online form may not accept this formatting and you might have trouble submitting the form. We suggest you save your form every 10-15 minutes whilst you are completing it, to avoid the risk of it 'timing out'.

Do check that you have fully answered all the questions because, if not, we might not be able to consider your application.

You should also prepare a document of no more than 6 pages which provides a high-level budget with milestones, in whatever format you wish, which demonstrates that you will deliver the required outcomes and impact. You should include this as an attachment to your application (you will be asked to do so before submitting the form).

Do not send your application by email or post to the Covenant Fund Trust – only applications submitted via the online form can be considered.

What happens next

After you submit your application you will get an automated email to confirm that your application has been submitted. This email will come from an address called mailuk@grantapplication.com. You may wish to add this email to a safe senders list on your email system to ensure that it can come through to you. If you have not received this email, then your application was not submitted successfully. Please log back into the portal to submit it.

The Trust will check your application to ensure that you've provided all the information we have requested. We may contact you during our assessment if there are any issues about which we are unclear – please do not assume any contact or lack thereof is an indication of your likelihood of being successful or declined

We may ask you to send us additional information or answer specific questions about your organisation. If we ask you to do this, you'll need to send us this information within five working days.

Please note that in order to minimise the risk to public funds the Trust may prioritise funding those applicants which have good track records on reporting to regulators, demonstrate transparent and appropriate governance arrangements and have comprehensive published accounts. For organisations which have previously had grants from us we would expect all reporting on these grants to be up-to-date, and may take this into account when considering new applications.

Checks we may carry out on your organisation and accounts

We may carry out several checks on the information you provide us – either during assessment or if you are offered a grant. This is to make sure that the information is correct and there are no significant risks we can identify when managing grants.

These may include checks:

- on whether information on your application form matches that held by your regulatory body (Companies House, Charity Commission, OFSTED etc.)
- that we can see that charities or CICs have a minimum of three unrelated Directors or Trustees listed on your regulator's website.
- that your governing documents (such as constitutions and memorandum and articles of association) are up to date, correct and properly signed
- on your accounts that are accessible through regulatory bodies
- on any identified concerns about a person named as a contact or who has a position within your organisation
- that your organisational name and address on your bank statement are consistent with the details you've provided in any completed form or the information that's held elsewhere in the public domain
- that your bank statement shows that your account is being managed in line with your own financial procedures and our programme requirements
- that the signatories are valid and well informed about the project
- on your published accounts and on your website/social media activity that your organisation is undertaking the activities as described in your application.
- To ensure you are up to date on all reporting with any active grants you hold with the Trust.

After submitting your application, you must advise the Trust of any significant changes in your organisation, its governance or finances which might impact on our consideration of your application.

We will assess your application against the key criteria of the programme. Each application is considered on the evidence provided and is not linked to the success of a previous bid.

Final decisions will be made by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trustees who will review the applications, using balancing criteria in addition to the key criteria. The balancing criteria include the relative strength and value for money of the project when viewed as part of a national portfolio of projects. Funds are limited. Therefore, the Trust will use its discretion to choose which projects to fund, ensuring a good spread of funded projects and to differentiate between projects that are considered fundable. Please note: We may also take the decision to part-fund proposals (this may involve awarding less money than was applied for).

After the decisions have been made, we will send an email to you using the primary contact email address you provided in your application. If we are not able to fund your project, we will write to you to tell you this.

If we plan to fund your project, we will email you in the first instance to advise you that you have been successful. This email will give you full instructions of what you need to do next in order to receive your official offer letter, how to accept the grant and what documents you need to provide. We may also invite you to a post award webinar or an online meeting to provide you with further information and answer any questions you may have.

You'll need to accept our grant offer and the terms & conditions of the grant within four weeks of receiving the Offer Letter or risk the offer lapsing. Our terms and conditions of grant can be accessed on our website but will be sent to you with the Offer Letter. If we offer you a grant, you will need to confirm that you will follow these terms and conditions of grant before we can release any of your grant to you. You must also make sure that the senior staff within your organisation know that you are submitting this grant application.

Once we have all the necessary documents back, and any initial conditions of grant have been met, we will pay the first instalment of your grant. If there are any discrepancies/queries within these documents, this will delay your payment, so please read the accompanying information we provide thoroughly. Grants will be paid in instalments on receipt of updates on the progress of your project, and the number and size of these will depend on the size and duration of the grant. A small proportion of the total amount awarded will be retained pending a satisfactory End of Grant report. If you receive a grant, you must keep good records of how the funds were spent and how many people you helped and how. We will ask you to report on this later and may ask for case studies to share best practice.

If you have any questions relating to this programme, please look at the programme information that we have on our website. Following this, if you still have queries and cannot find the answer in these guidance notes, please email info@covenantfund.org.uk

Timetable:

- **Applications must be submitted by 5pm on 22 May 2023**
- **Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application before the end of June 2023**
- **Successful applicants will then be expected to start their projects before 1 September 2023**